

# THE GATEWAY

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**GETTING A MAKEOVER** Earlier this month, the University of Alberta announced that it intends to buy the mostly-empty Hudson's Bay building for \$60 million and move several non-academic departments downtown. If the purchase is finalized, the building is expected to be occupied by September 2006, easing space shortages on campus and helping to boost Edmonton's downtown economy. The Gateway examines the proposal in a news feature on page 4.

## Loan system gets online upgrade

JAKE TROUGHTON  
Senior News Editor

The days of waiting days or weeks for responses to student loan applications, then standing in long lineups to get the forms signed, are now over for Alberta students.

A new \$11-million online system launched by the provincial government on Monday allows students applying for loans to receive an instantaneous response. While there was previously an online application form, the applications still had to be processed by humans, and it generally took four to eight days to get a response—longer for applications sent by regular mail. The new system will also allow enrollment to be confirmed automatically, so students will no longer have to get forms signed in person.

"A lot of students have a real concern about how they're going to finance their education," said Advanced Education Minister Dave Hancock.

PLEASE SEE LOANS • PAGE 2

## Chilean ex-pat mobilizes to help his hometown hospital

ANDREW RENFREE  
News Writer

Surrounded by monitors and cables in the heart of the U of A's computer department, Computing and Network Services employee Francisco Velasquez's thoughts turn to his hometown of Quintero, Chile—and after work, his actions follow.

"In countries as nice as Canada, we have so many facilities, medical care for people, education and so on. It hurts us to see this little town deteriorate and not progress as it should."

FRANCISCO VELASQUEZ

Velasquez is the president of the International Fraternity of Quintero (IFQ), an organization that was formed

in early 2001 to send medical supplies to the lone hospital in Quintero, which serves about 35 000 people in that city and surrounding towns. The group is composed of many people who were either born or have lived in Quintero and now reside in different countries throughout the world.

Their goal is to send a container filled with as many as six wheelchairs, ten hospital beds, 1200 shirts, and various other medical supplies to Quintero before Christmas. According to Velasquez, the idea to help his hometown came from travelling there, and through discussions with his friends and family who had a connection with the town.

"Talking with these friends we came to the conclusion that we've got it so good, wherever we live," said Velasquez. "In countries as nice as Canada, we have so many facilities, medical care for people, education and so on."

"It hurts us to see this little town deteriorate and not progress as it should. We figure we're living okay, so why shouldn't we be able to do something?"

PLEASE SEE QUINTERO • PAGE 3

## U of A team tackles computer poker

Makers of Poki disappointed by last week's World Poker Robot Championship

DANIEL KASZOR  
Editor-in-Chief

They've taken over our automobile plants and our chess championships, and now they aim to take over the seedy back rooms of our bars and the top tables at our glitziest casinos. They may not be here quite yet, but the poker-playing robots are definitely coming.

The inaugural World Poker Robot Championship was held last week in Las Vegas to crown the title of greatest poker-playing program in the world. However, the University of Alberta Poker Research Group—who helped bring the event together and had their program, Poki, compete in some exhibition matches—were underwhelmed with the tournament.

"It was called the world championship, but it wasn't really; most of the strong programs we know of weren't competing, and [the groups behind them] had no idea that it was even happening," explained team coordinator and Computing Science Department Chair Jonathan Schaeffer.

The team was also worried about the nature of the tournament format



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: NICK WEBB

**I'LL SEE THAT, AND RAISE 11001001** They still lag behind the best players, but computers are starting to make waves in the poker world.

making the competition so luck based that they might lose to what they felt was an inferior program—a concern that was well founded.

"The program that won was called pokerbot," Schaeffer said. "We played a match against it and we lost, which we were afraid was going to

happen. What made it lucky was that the size of the bets increased; so only the last few hands mattered. We have some analysis that shows that we played better, but the fact is that we lost and I'm not going to sit here and give sour grapes."

PLEASE SEE POKI • PAGE 3

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## Quantity is quality

With a bump up to full time, U of A swimming coach Sam Montgomery hopes to return his teams to the top.

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## Not left at the altar

Is Wedding Crashers actually good, or just a drunken uncle making a toast? Find out by reading our review.

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## New system 'a small improvement': Lettner

Minister stresses the importance of faster loan decisions, but SU says more money is more important

LOANS • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"This tool is going to take a lot of that angst away, because you'll be able to get on the system, find out what you're eligible for, and find out what you have to figure out in terms of additional resources or appeals," Hancock continued.

"It's a lot like adding more express lanes to the grocery store: you get through faster, but food still costs just as much. In the big scheme of things, it's a small improvement, but not worth enormous accolades."

GRAHAM LETTNER,  
STUDENTS' UNION PRESIDENT

While the actual loan system and the amounts of loans and rewards remains unchanged, Hancock suggested that speeding up the application response process will make it easier for students to finance their education by giving them more time to deal with any shortfalls they may face.

"If [the loan amount] is sufficient, that's great, and they have the confidence to move on and take their education," he said. "If there's some glitches, they know immediately and can get to work on dealing with those. It's a great system, particularly for those in rural areas who can't walk into an office and talk face-to-face with somebody."

Students' Union President Graham Lettner, however, was unimpressed by the change, noting that while it speeds up the loan process, it does nothing to decrease the overall cost of post-secondary education.

"It's a lot like adding more express lanes to the grocery store: you get through faster, but food still costs just as much," he said. "In the big scheme of things, it's a small improvement, but not worth enormous accolades."

While the new system was only announced on Monday, it has been online since 15 June, and around 6400 students accessed it between then and Monday, or about 40 per cent of total applications in that time period.

While fewer workers will be devoted to processing loan applications under the new system, Hancock says he doesn't expect any staff reductions. Instead, current staff will be able to devote more time to solving



JIFFREY GREENHAUS

**GETTING FASTER** Dave Hancock explains Alberta's new student loan application system, which offers instantaneous responses.

problems that some students may have with their applications.

"It'll improve the quality of life of some of our employees, because they won't have to do as much overtime in the peak periods in the hottest time of summer," said Hancock. "There are always some applications that need somebody to sit down and work on the details, and by automating the system this way, it frees up staff to deal

with those."

Hancock added that this isn't the only online system the government has been working on. They're planning a centralized application system for all Alberta universities, and are also working toward a database of scholarships, though Hancock admitted the latter is more difficult due to the large number of organizations that give out scholarships.

## STREETERS

The National Hockey League and its players are expected to ratify a new collective bargaining agreement this week, ending a lockout that wiped out the entire 2004-05 season.

Are you excited about the return of NHL hockey?

Qing Shi  
Science IVRobbie Nissen  
Science IVMatthew Kutrky  
Engineering IIIJenna Barber  
Psychology IV

I don't care. I'm not a hockey fan. I just watch the game once in a while.

I don't care that much. I used to be interested in hockey, but even since the lockout I think everyone has been a little damaged. We feel neglected.

I certainly care. I was a little disappointed when the season was cancelled way back, but now that things are looking up I think it's positive for the city of Edmonton and for all of the fans.

Oh, really? I didn't know about that. I think it's a good thing because it's good entertainment. I'm a hockey player myself, so I think they need to settle whatever they need to get done and then get on playing, because people love hockey.

Compiled and photographed by Chloë Fedio and Jake Troughton

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# Poker gives computers a challenge

POKI • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Still, even with some negative experiences, Schaeffer said he's happy that they took part in the competition and hopes that this tournament will lead to better tournaments in the future.

"We've been trying to get an event like this organized for a number of years, and we felt it was more important for us to attend than for us to walk away," he said. "Our hope is that the next time it's better organized and better suited to show the relative strengths of the programs."

Beyond the growth of poker as part of the North American cultural experience, computer poker research, like the kind spearheaded by the U of A Poker Research Group, is important because it makes computers solve problems in a different, more human way, completely separate from the methods used in programs like those that play computer-mastered games like chess.

"Almost 40 years ago, computer chess people discovered an algorithm called alpha beta search," Schaeffer

explained. "The research community quickly discovered that if you used the algorithm on faster and faster computers, the computers would play better and better chess. There are four or five methods and you can use them to put together a pretty good poker playing program, but there isn't that silver bullet; you can't go and put these techniques on a computer that is a hundred times faster and say 'poker is a solved problem.'"

Poker can't be "solved" this way because it involves incomplete or imperfect information. Unlike the chessboard, where all the pieces and possible moves are known, the computer can't tell what is in an opponent's hand. As such, there are few real situations where information is as perfect as it is in a chess game.

"Imperfect information is a fact of life," Schaeffer noted. "Therefore, the research we do in this area is much more relevant towards our goal of trying to create intelligent computers."

The tournament ended with the U of A's Poki facing its toughest competi-

tion—not pokerbot, but human poker champion Phil "Unabomber" Laak.

"After a couple hundred hands we were winning, but we ended up losing," Schaeffer said. "It's probably best that the human won, because we think that humans are still the better players. In this sort of craps-hoot format, I was sort of afraid that the computer might win, because if it did the media would blow it out of proportion."

The reason that humans are still the best poker players stems from the fact that they can make judgments based on less information than a computer can. While a computer needs multiple data points to change its statistical analysis of a situation, a human can make inferences based on few events, or even just one. This inhibits the speed at which a computer can adapt its game.

"We need to make computers learn faster and more reliably," Schaeffer said. "But that is the research; that's the hardest part."

## \$10 000 needed to ship supplies to Chile

QUINTERO • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Velasquez noted that there are corporations and chemical companies in Quintero, but he said that they are not concerned with charity and the well-being of the locals. Corporate apathy didn't phase Velasquez, though, and he became determined to get medical supplies to the community hospital any way he could.

"My idea is to collect all of these [medical supplies] and eventually raise enough money to bring them over to Quintero, through our donations, by our fundraising, or whatever we have to do, but we're going to do it," he said. "This is a brand new experience for us, but the motivation is there and we're going to get it done."

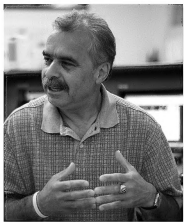
Velasquez travels to Quintero on an annual basis, and for the past several years he has been collecting and

bringing supplies with him. He can only bring a few items each time, such as two wheelchairs or a suitcase full of shirts, as he has to pay for the luggage charges out of his own pocket. Now, the members of the HQ are working to raise \$10 000 so that they can afford to ship a large volume of supplies to Chile in December.

"A wheelchair would be the equivalent of roughly \$150 in Canada," said Velasquez.

"I would say about ten per cent of the population [in Quintero] doesn't make the equivalent of \$75 a month. Normally the people in need are those low-income people, so how are they going to be able to afford these wheelchairs?"

Velasquez said the greatest reward for him is seeing the reaction of the local citizens who his group helps.



CHARITABLE Francisco Velasquez.

"You should see the look on their faces when we deliver a wheelchair to a person who is confined to a house, or to their bed, or cannot walk—it's amazing."

he admitted that many of the ideas were still in the planning stage. Lettner focused on ways to allow students to get more out of their time on campus.

Though the majority of the presentation was largely dedicated to getting Council into the frame of mind to embark on a long-term project, Lettner did provide a specific example of a partnership he would like to see. According to Lettner, he is pursuing a program to be developed jointly with Alumni Affairs that would eventually establish a mentorship program to pair up alumni and current undergraduates.

### ELECTION CHANGES SOUTHT

With the lesser aspects of the agenda dealt with, Council moved on to debate the proposed changes to elections. The first most councilors heard of the bill—which proposed moving votes on referendum to the same date as Students' Council elections rather than that of executive elections, switched the dates of executive and councilor elections, and increased the budgets for candidates in council elections—was when it was presented for first reading.

Although Science Councilor Shawna Pandya, who moved the bill, apologized for the short notice, she and Chief Returning Officer Rachel Wojnowski insisted it couldn't have been avoided. Wojnowski pointed out that the deadline for information to be included in the SU Handbook was the next day and if Council did decide to switch the dates for elections, it was vital that information be

included in the handbooks.

While there was some debate on the merits of the proposal most councilors bristled at having to so radically alter the elections process with only a token amount of consideration given to the issue. Council decided to split the bill into three separate bills for each of the three proposed changes. After three hours of debate, Council deferred consideration of the first two bills until a future meeting, while the third, to increase budgets for Council candidates, was referred to the budget and finance committee.

The decision was hastened when Lettner alluded to the fact that the content of the handbook is a matter of executive character and that he would fill it at ease including the date changes. The primary reason for this, Lettner pointed out, was the fact the bill could only receive first reading in time for the deadline, leaving it open for reconsideration and possible defeat at second reading.

### COUNCIL NOTES

• During his report, Vice-President (Academic) Mat Johnson said that the return of 24/7 SUB was essentially a "slam dunk."

Council considered a motion reviving the idea of a plebiscite to gauge student support for a fee to support expansion and renovation of the Van Vliet Centre, but it was deferred to a future meeting for want of information. This marked the second time this issue had come to council without being put to a vote.

## SUMMER COUNCIL FORUM

Compiled by Ross Prusakowski

Students' Council meets every second Tuesday in the Council Chambers in University Hall at 6pm. Council meetings are open to all students. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 26 July.

By university, most students have managed to refine procrastination down to an art form. However, after having a meeting where election issues dominated the agenda eight months ahead of the actual elections, it would be difficult to accuse Students' Council of having that most typical student trait—even though they did pull a near all-nighter.

The meeting didn't appear to be daunting when it was called to order, as the agenda consisted mainly of a presentation, reports from the Executive and Council's various committees and a single motion. However, the addition of a bill dealing with fairly major reforms to the elections process dashed the chances for a quick meeting of Council.

### PRESIDENT FEELING COOPERATIVE

First, Council was given a presentation by Students' Union President Graham Lettner regarding partnerships he's pursuing with the University. While

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**THE GATEWAY**



# U of A goes shopping for the Bay

Purchase of historic building could ease space crunch on campus, increase University's profile, and help revive downtown core

CHLOÉ FIEDO  
Deputy News Editor

The University of Alberta has a shortage of space; downtown Edmonton has a huge building sitting empty. Now, many in the city are hoping both problems will be solved in one swoop.

After sitting vacant for more than ten years, the historic Hudson's Bay building in downtown Edmonton is finally getting some attention, as the U of A has signed an option to purchase it for \$60 million and develop it into a satellite campus.

A large portion of the space in the Bay building is designated for the new home of the Research Transition Facility (RTF), a resource on campus devoted to commercializing research to help companies in the transition from the academic research environment to the commercial private sector.

New University President Dr Indira Samarasekera said that, while the campus will still be concentrated on the south side of the river, an expansion to the downtown area will improve accessibility to the University.

"We're going to have a downtown presence. It's not moving great chunks of the campus there, but it's really extending our access to the community that might be interested in accessing the U of A from a downtown location," Samarasekera said.

The RTF is currently located in an old nurse's residence on campus, but with plans to demolish that building in order to make room for the Health Sciences Ambulatory Learning Centre, space shortages on campus are increasingly becoming a problem, according to Vice-President (Facilities and Operations) Don Hickey.



**THE OL' BAY BUILDING** The U of A will renovate the interior if it purchases the building, but the landmark facade of the building will likely remain unchanged. TARA STEGUTZ

**"We're going to have a downtown presence. It's not moving great chunks of the campus there, but it's really extending our access to the community that might be interested in accessing the U of A from a downtown location."**

DR INDIRA SAMARASEKERA,  
U OF A PRESIDENT

"The fact is there's nowhere on campus. We have a lot of space pressures," said Hickey. "I think the key is the Research Transition Facility. There is no space on campus, so finding a new home outside of campus was a requirement. Sometimes the stars all line up, and I think there's a lot of things going for this."

Space shortages on campus are nothing new. In April, the University made the decision to convert Pembina Hall, the only graduate student residence on campus, into office space in an attempt to use campus space more efficiently. The University anticipates that by tearing down the RTF building, the space available can be maximized to lend itself to the needs of the growing campus. Provost Carl Amrhein explained.

"[The RTF building] is old, but it's in the way, really," he said. "It's hard to bring red brick buildings that were

built as residence halls up to current standards for teaching and research. Just the air conditioning gets very expensive for a building that size," said Amrhein. "In this case, we have a building that's being torn down to make room for a vitally important teaching and clinical training facility that created, for us, the need to find space."

Further space shortages on campus are evident in the lack of a display facility for the Macgargart donation of rare Chinese textiles and artifacts to the University. Amrhein said that despite the space available in the purchase of the Bay building, it will not be turned into gallery space.

"The collection we have from the Macgargarts as we get to know it may well be one of only one or two in the world," he said. "It's unique in that sense, and it's also very fragile. It's not clear to me that it would make economic sense to try to turn an old department store into a gallery that has very high standards of humidity control, light, and heat. Displaying is really, really difficult, and I don't think the Bay building would lend itself to that."

Hickey explained the sale of the Bay building is expected to be complete by the end of September, meaning the University will be occupying the building as early as September 2006. The University hopes the government will help fund this initiative, he added.

Amrhein is also hopeful that the government will come through and offer funding for the project, but explained that tenants occupying space in the building will also be paying the bills.

"We hope they'll be helping: federal, provincial and city. We think all three of them have an interest in this working out. The rest of it we'll do

ourselves through rental recoveries," said Amrhein.

The Bay building is currently vacant but for the broadcasting corporation CHUM Limited—which owns A-Channel and radio station 91.7 The Bounce—and the University intends to keep the company as a tenant, Samarasekera said, making the building more affordable to the University.

**"It has benefits in that it's terrific for downtown, it's terrific for the local real estate market, and it saves an important heritage building. We'll protect that building forever; everybody knows that."**

DR CARL AMRHEIN,  
U OF A PROVOST

In the past, extending the campus into downtown has been suggested by people outside the University as a means of reviving Edmonton's downtown, and the Bay purchase has been applauded for the same reason, but Amrhein said that this time the University felt that the move was in its own best interest.

"I think the discussion in the past that became difficult for the University is the idea that the University should move some of its courses downtown to help the local real estate market rebound," he said. "Well, the University doesn't organize its curricu-

lum to help local real estate markets."

Moving parts of the campus downtown would likely isolate students, being a detrimental factor to the University experience, Amrhein said.

"One of the difficulties that the University faces with courses and degree programs is that if you can't move enough [students] in one step, so that there's a sort of academic community, then what you've done is picked up a few students, moved them off campus and then they're isolated. So, moving one or two courses into the Bay building would be a problem for us," said Amrhein.

With the move of RTF, the Bay building is intended to help the University commercialize research; however, Amrhein explained that it might also be used for continuing education programs or for professional development.

The University's initiative to buy the Bay building has been in the works for some time, and the hope is that it will

tie the institution closer to Edmonton's core, Samarasekera said.

"The University has always been interested in connecting with the City, and discussions have gone on for a little longer than a year on this. This provides a perfect opportunity to bring to life that intention."

The Bay building was declared a Municipal Historic Resource in 1989 and the University is keen on protecting its heritage value while capitalizing on its ability to promote academic development, Amrhein said.

"It's commercial activity, it's commercializing research, and we need the space. It has a tenant, the building is affordable and the tenant helps us pay for it," he said. "So you see a convergence of issues that make this move really important. It has benefits in that it's terrific for downtown, it's terrific for the local real estate market, and it saves an important heritage building. We'll protect that building forever; everybody knows that."

## HISTORY OF THE BAY BUILDING

The Hudson's Bay Company first built a two-story wood store on the current site in 1893. In 1904, that store was replaced by a three-story brick building, and over the next two decades the building was expanded several times and a neighbouring warehouse was added.

In 1926, the company acquired the remaining buildings on the block and announced plans for a large-scale expansion of the store, but the project wouldn't be completed until 1939, following the Great Depression, when the first phase of

the current building was erected. It was expanded again to its current size in 1954.

The interior underwent renovations in 1974 and 1980, but the exterior remained unaltered, and in 1989 City Council designated the building's facade a Municipal Historic Resource.

The Bay abandoned the building in 1995, and it has remained empty aside from a small portion of the ground floor that A-Channel, and later 91.7 The Bounce, has occupied since 1997.

## Bay building not the miracle cure for our downtown

WHEN THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA announced its intention to purchase the old Hudson's Bay building two weeks ago, it seemed that the entire city rejoiced. Struggling downtown merchants let out a collective sigh of relief, their eyes glittering at the prospect of free-spending students in the area. Local journalists scoured their archives for evidence that they had long ago predicted the move, with one even boldly printing, "I told you so." More importantly, though, they asked how many classrooms could be fit in the Bay building.

The move to downtown is potentially a brilliant plan. The University's voracious appetite for more office space has been well publicized, and after the recent re-assignment of Pembina Hall—one of Canada's oldest residence buildings—into offices, there is hardly any space left for the administration to gobble up. An extension into the neighbouring area is impossible due to the valiant resistance of the Garneau residents. At the same time, the downtown Bay Building is barely at full capacity and awaits its fate as an ugly parkade. So, the Bay building expansion, in some ways, is a timely and wise move.

But it's incredibly naïve for everyone to assume that there could be a downtown campus, and if there were, that students taking classes downtown will somehow rejuvenate the area.

With all due respect, the one thing that all these self-proclaimed "downtown boosters" failed to notice is that classroom spaces aren't the main reason for the downtown expansion. The U of A administration only plans to house TBC Edmonton and various U of A spin-off companies in the Bay building. Noticeably absent from their plan is any concrete vision about a "downtown campus" that would require students, specifically undergrad students, to trek across the river and subsequently breathe life into the downtown.

The only time Samarasekera mentioned "students" during a 6 July press event was when she said, "The student numbers at this point are very unclear. We have not had a discussion with the deans on the specifics. Our idea right now is to look at things like continuing education programs that are currently offered through the Faculty of Extension."

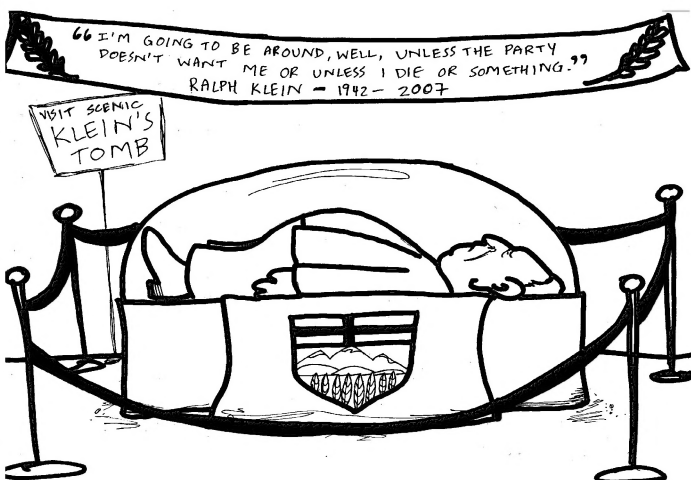
Note that the "students" she mentioned are not undergrads. They're adults, possibly the very same adults who work downtown during the day. And if they aren't spending money in their shopping grounds now, why would they begin to spend their money there now that they're taking "Sex and the City on the Psychoanalytic Couch" every Thursday night?

Another neglected fact is that the Old Bay building, despite its close proximity to an LRT station, is still 30 minutes away from the campus proper. This means that if young students are, in fact, to take courses on both the main campus and a hypothetical downtown campus, travel alone will eat up at least an hour. In addition, this sort of frequent LRT traveling is unfeasible without a universal bus pass, which is only in the most primitive stages of negotiation.

The argument was also made that specific faculties will benefit from close proximity to the business community downtown, the obvious candidate being the Faculty of Business. But who in their right mind would want to serve a sizable chunk of the University student population from the main campus? Any university, including the U of A, thrives on interdisciplinary interactions amongst its students. How can it promote learning if most of the students remain out of reach from other corners of the campus? In addition, there is also an intangible collegiate atmosphere present in a full and vibrant campus that the Bay building surely cannot replicate.

There are obviously many advantages for the University to expand towards downtown. At least the Education parkade won't be the target of the next hostile takeover when the administration needs more office space. Do what you want with the Bay building, but please don't even think of siphoning students to a downtown campus—We like going to school on this side of the river.

IRIS TSE  
Design & Production Editor



## LETTERS

### Conservatives under-stand Parliament, gay marriage best

In response to your editorial on same sex marriage ("Conservatives need to accept gay marriage," 7 July).

I believe we conservatives understand our Parliamentary system of governance far better than you. Our constitution makes no provision for the formation of a cabinet or for powers to be vested in the prime minister greater than those of any other member of parliament. Our constitution makes no provision for the formation of political parties and certainly does not make a provision for allegiance to a political party to override a member of parliament's duty to represent those who elected him or her to office.

Conservatives have accepted homosexuals as part of society for many decades. Our position has been and remains one of "live and let live." Homosexuals have been granted all of the legal rights of heterosexuals, including those reserved for partners in a common-law marriage. Same-sex marriage has nothing whatever to do with legal or human rights. Same-sex marriage is a direct frontal attack on the religious beliefs many Canadians hold dear. Some homosexual activists are upset that they are not welcome in certain church congregations and are determined to force a change the majority of citizens do not want.

Same-sex marriage is also a direct attack on our basic citizen right to the freedoms of belief, conscience, expression and religion. As a Canadian citizen, I have the right to say: "No thank you. I do not wish to adopt your lifestyle, orientations or social values. I will not allow you to force your beliefs on me or on my community."

Conservatives have no need to adopt gay marriage or the underlying attempt to undermine and change the social values of our peers. SSM is a regressive piece of

legislation, breaking the covenant to separate the state from our churches by using the courts to substitute for the state.

Our constitution does not provide for court-made law. Court declarations that SSM must be written into our law are invalid, as only parliament and our legislatures have the constitutional authority and power to write law in Canada.

JOHN FELDSTED  
Gimli, MB

### NASCAR racing has unseen depth

Regarding your article about not liking NASCAR racing ("There are things more interesting than NASCAR," 12 May). I too did not like NASCAR racing. I thought it was kind of ridiculous to sit in hot, steamy stands drinking beer and watching 800 horsepower hot rods run around after each other in a circle at upwards of 200 miles per hour.

I am a dyed in the wool football player. I missed the hockey season this past year. I had season tickets to the Phillies—I still go to their games. I enjoy soccer. I even watch BASS tournament fishing. But, back in the spring of 2002, working for a company that provides security to NASCAR motor coaches, I started getting to meet and talk to the support people for the drivers. I met their motor coach drivers, their pit crews, their families, and it all started to make sense. There is so much that goes into these races, so much preparation, so much that goes on in the background to put a solid competitive race on come Sunday. I have really started looking forward to the race week twice each year when they come back to visit our track.

On the surface, it still looks like the same old 43 guys chasing each other around the track at 200 miles an hour, but I now understand what it takes to put it together, and support the teams, and how the sponsors integrate and work with everybody. I must admit, if I hadn't had the opportunity to get this inti-

mately involved, I probably would not still like the race, but getting in at this level has given me an appreciation for the sport, and I'm now a fan.

There is more to the race than it is apparent to the novice, uninformed viewer. There is so much more to the surface shows. Just a point of view from a "fan".

BOB GEARY  
Winnipeg, DE

### Subtlety of NASCAR racing eludes Gateway

I read your article panning NASCAR ("There are things more interesting than NASCAR," 12 May), which you have every right to do of course, but you claim to understand it, which you clearly do not.

I agree with you that F1 and similar racing is more tricky for the driver, but, as a spectator sport, is incredibly dull. Normally in F1 you will never see an on-track pass for position. The cars line up for the start, dash towards the first turn, usually cause a huge wreck somewhere back in the pack and then whoever is leading after turn one goes on to win. Contrast that with NASCAR, where the ultimate winner is in doubt right to the end. You can have more lead changes in the first race of the year than F1 has had since it formed. That makes for great viewing.

In addition the cars approach something that we all might drive and the drivers come from ranks we all might have come from.

I'm definitely a Johnny—completely to the sport as I really only got interested in the '90s, right around the time Jeff Gordon started his career. I began cheering for him because I liked his rainbow paint scheme. Who knew then how far he would go.

But what really got me going was a computer game. Like you, I just thought it was semi-fast cars going around in a loop. I found that there was an incredible level of strategy involved as well as tremendous skill required to run right

on the edge of tire grip so that you didn't end up in a heap against the wall.

Invariably, people tell me how easy it is to just turn left all the time. Then I sit them down to my computer, start up NASCAR racing, give them the wheel and they drive directly into the wall.

Of course, I've been playing for a while, so I give them some more time to practice, and at a track like Bristol they'll be delighted that they are running well, not wrecking and doing 30-second laps. Then, I'll sit down and do a 16-second lap. That is the sport. Anyone can eventually sit down and do decent laps. It's shoving off those last few seconds that is the tough part.

Throw in the fact that lots of guys in my online league can run 30-second laps but shreds tires doing so adds the final twist to the proceedings.

In the end, it's like anything else. You think you understand, and with a cursory view it looks incredibly simple—until you try it of course. Golf can be distilled down to putting a small ball in a hole. Not too tough, right? Then when you try it and shoot 150, all the subtleties come out and you truly understand.

For the record, I'm not some southern, redneck, yehawing myself drunk every race. I'm an air traffic controller working in Winnipeg who has run an online racing league for five years.

TERRY FERGUSON  
Winnipeg, MB

Letters to the editor should be dropped off at room 3-04 of the Students' Union Building, or e-mailed to [managing@gateway.ualberta.ca](mailto:managing@gateway.ualberta.ca).

The Gateway reserves the right to edit letters for length and clarity, and to refuse publication of any letter it deems racist, sexist, libelous, or otherwise hateful in nature.

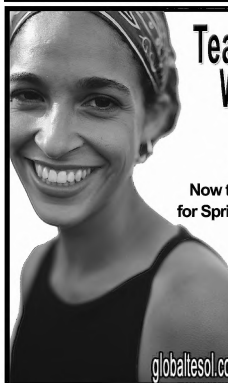
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## Opinion

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## Without a global Batman, can there be justice and accountability?

G8 nations, their citizens, must act to reduce poverty and promote equality



MAUREEN BRINKER

Before the recent G8 conference, I saw the efforts of Bob Geldof and company as futile: a desperate, late attempt to make up for 20 years of neglect. After the G8 conference, shocked as I was by the tiny flicker of care shown by the world as it rallied around Africa, I still remain fairly cynical. The world, especially the G8, has a lot of work yet to do.

Just as Batman feels compelled to save Gotham city, I once felt compelled to save the world. Unlike Gotham city, though, the evil in the world is much more difficult to define and root out. There are, of course, your Osama bin Ladens and Timothy McVeighs, but there is also your average glutton, average greedy suit on Wall Street and average crooked politician. I'd need more than Kevlar, gadgets and a fast car to defeat that kind of evil, and in my penniless and powerless situation, I can't even afford those. So, I've left it to the elite: the Geldofs, Bonos, Martins and, though I shudder at the thought, Bushs, of the world.

Yet more and more, it seems that the elites of the world are missing the

mark. The fact that it took Bob Geldof 20 years to put together another benefit for Africa is mind-boggling given the contrast between his supposed contempt for poverty and his own luxurious lifestyle. Where was he when Rwanda imploded or when apartheid ruled South Africa?

That said, we can only expect so much from rock stars—our leaders, though, have no excuses. Lester B Pearson called for a 0.7 per cent GDP commitment to ending world poverty in 1969—a 36-year hiatus in answering his call is unacceptable. The recent scrambling to make up for years of greed does little to assuage any guilt or, for that matter, cynicism. There is poverty everywhere, not just in Africa, and the problems in Africa run much deeper than just economics.

Nigeria, for instance, has the highest debt in Africa at \$35 billion, but because they don't meet the G8's standards for preventing corruption and human rights abuses, they don't qualify for aid. Indeed they are corrupt, but with Russia a member of the G8, it seems a little like the pot calling the kettle black. The G8 is, after all, dedicated to democracy, human rights and capitalism—I wasn't aware Russia excelled at any of those things.

Nothing, then, with capitalism on the prowl backed by the G8, and with weak, desperate nations acting as prey, I shudder to think of what will

happen to Africa. Given that there seems to be little plan in place for the dispersal of this new aid, it seems it could be open season for more companies like Del Monte or Nike.

The G8's success story, Mozambique, has indeed enjoyed steady economic growth, but over half of the country still lives on less than one dollar a day, and the prevalence of AIDS has increased steadily. Sure, its capital, Maputo, is a modern model in progress, with cellphone companies and government buildings to boot, but outside the city is squalor. No doubt the G8 has an interesting definition of success—as the gap between rich and poor widens in the West, it is likewise nurtured in Africa.

Perhaps a Batman of the world would be beneficial to strike fear into the hearts of dictators and despots so that nations who desperately need aid can receive it. But, even if they reach this point, Batman cannot ensure that the greedy suit on Wall Street won't take advantage of nations in desperate situations, or that hospitals will receive enough funding to not only fight AIDS, but to provide needed education about it as well. Batman can only do so much—the rest, as the saying goes, is up to us. This thought once sent a very cold chill up my spine, and though recent events have shaken me, this chill a few degrees, it's hardly enough.

My spine is still pretty fucking cold.

## Aboriginal reconciliation can come only through respect and historical understanding



JARED MILNE

peoples in general. He pointed out just how much damage had been done to aboriginal people by attempting to make them "just" Canadians through the policies of assimilation.

The horrors of the residential school system, the attempts to wipe out aboriginal cultures, and increasingly repressive control of aboriginal lives were all part of Canada's attempt to assimilate its aboriginal peoples and terminate their unique status and relations with Canada. As Cardinal pointed out, these policies failed to totally destroy aboriginal culture and identity, but they did leave many First Nations people with problems like alcoholism, drug abuse, and violence.

**Books—and Native Studies classes—can show non-aboriginal people the aboriginal perspectives and the background of the problems and views we have today.**

Many of Cardinal's observations in *The Unjust Society* still hold up today. Non-aboriginal Canadians who don't understand the real causes of aboriginal poverty and misery often believe that the demands of First Nations people are just clamours for handouts. They don't know the real reasons for these problems or demands, and haven't seen things from the aboriginal point of view.

When Europeans and others came to

this land, aboriginal people were willing to share it with them. But in doing so, they did not agree to give up their cultures, or their identities. Attempting to force the issue only led to the problems we have today. We, as non-aboriginal Canadians, have to realize that treating people as "just" Canadians isn't enough, and that there are different perspectives and backgrounds for different people in this country. There has to be a balance between individual and collective rights, and between aboriginal and non-aboriginal perspectives. Most aboriginal people don't want to secede from Canada or anything like that: they just want fair treatment, and for Canada's original past apocalypses to be honoured—as they have every right to.

Cardinal always tried to maintain a balanced perspective, and part of the reason he wrote *The Unjust Society* was to try to explain the perspective of Canada's aboriginal peoples to mainstream society. Books—and Native Studies classes—can show non-aboriginal people the aboriginal perspectives and the background of the problems and views we have today.

We are all Canadians: it's what ties us together as people. But we also have other identities that make us special and unique. We owe it to each other to try to learn the perspective of other people in this country and to try to live together. It's what can make us Canadian, and what the aboriginal people initially wanted, when they agreed to share the land with the rest of us. It's what Cardinal worked all his life for, and what he had in mind when he spoke the prophetic words, "If you want us to be good Canadians, you have to let us be good Indians!"



# Full-time swim coach ready to dive right in

JAKE TROUGHTON  
Senior News Editor

This season, after years of being coached on a part-time basis, the Golden Bears and Pandas swim teams will finally have a full-time coach, as Sam Montgomery returns for his second year at the helm.

After a general Canadian Interuniversity Sport review last year that saw swimming retain its fully funded status, the U of A athletics department moved to increase the teams' resources, leading to Montgomery taking on a full-time workload. He now hopes that being able to direct his focus on the teams will help turn around a program that has slipped from the top five in CIS half a decade ago to ninth- and twelfth-place finishes for the Bears and Pandas respectively last season.

**"At both Canada West and CIS, there were events where pretty much all you needed to do was have a swimmer in it and you would have scored. As Lenin said, 'There's quantity and quality, but quantity has a quality all its own.'"**

**SAM MONTGOMERY  
U OF A SWIM COACH**

"Not only did I have three jobs last year, but my wife and I had twins on 1 September, right at the beginning of the season," said Montgomery. "And on top of that, I didn't really know I had these jobs until August, so my planning for last year was behind. Coming in late, I didn't have the opportunity to do any recruiting, and there hadn't been much done the previous year, so we basically took the team we had the previous year, plus walk-ons in the fall, and we improved our position slightly."



MATTHEW REHNER

**GOING SWIMMINGLY** With nothing else to distract him, Sam Montgomery looks to bring consistency, talent and depth to the U of A swim team.

Now, entering his second year, he's had time to recruit athletes for a team that last year simply didn't have enough swimmers to pose a serious challenge at either the Canada West or CIS championships, where a full team consists of 16 men and 16 women.

"I've worked pretty hard to recruit the team to full size," he said. "When I look at the university teams across the country that are performing in the top five, they all have full-size teams. Last year, we had 20 at Canada West and only nine at CIS [championships], so we need to get a full-size team, and I think we'll have it this year."

"At both Canada West and CIS, there were events

where pretty much all you needed to do was have a swimmer in it and you would have scored," he added. "As Lenin said, 'There's quantity and quality, but quantity has a quality all its own.'"

Next year's Bears and Pandas certainly aren't likely to take the national championship banners away from the UBC Thunderbirds, whose men and women have each won eight straight titles, but the consistency at the coaching position, combined with making it full-time, should help them take steps toward returning to the top tier in CIS.

"We still don't have what you'd call a star, someone who can walk in and automatically win a medal at CIS, but we will have more finalists,"

Montgomery said. "I'm looking at building the team, then recruiting star athletes into a system that can be productive for them."

Montgomery and the athletics department are hoping that having a full-time coach will make it easier to build a strong enough program to attract those star athletes.

"Better swimmers want to come to a program that is going to be successful; school, of course, is very important, but secondly is how successful the program is, and for a lot of people, tenth just doesn't cut it," Montgomery said. "I think we need to move up into the top five to attract the type of athletes that are going to make the difference."

## Pandas coach set to lead Canada volleyballers against the world



**SPIKE!** Larissa Cundy (left) is among several Pandas who will join coach Laurie Eisler in Turkey.

ANDREW RENFREE  
Sports Writer

Apparently Pandas volleyball head coach Laurie Eisler doesn't know the meaning of the term summer vacation. Although the CIS volleyball season won't start for another three months, Eisler is getting back to the court early this year to coach the Canadian National B women's volleyball team at the Summer Universiade.

"It's nice to be back at it," said Eisler, laughing at the mention of a summer holiday. "The nature of our job as coaches is that we never really escape from volleyball, but I think all coaches would agree that your preference would be to be in the gym."

Eisler is set to coach the squad for the Summer Universiade held in Izmir, Turkey from 11-21 August. This will be the 23rd time the Fédération Internationale du Sport Universitaire (FISU), which is the international affiliate of CIS, holds the World University Games. It's expected to draw as many as 8000 student athletes from 170 countries. Eisler had the opportunity to attend the 1995 University Games with the National B team as an assistant coach, and is looking forward to representing Canada in the head coach role this year.

"It's an awesome event and it's a great opportunity for many of these athletes to experience international competition for the first time," she said. "To be a part of that is really a great honour and a chance for me, professionally, to get out my comfort zone and step out into the international scene."

The team that Eisler is coaching acts as a link between university sport and Canada's senior women's volleyball team. It's a feeder system

that connects CIS, CCAA, and even NCAA athletes with Canada's world championship team, which is attempting to qualify for the 2008 and 2012 Olympics.

During the Universiade, Canada will be in a pool with Estonia, New Zealand, Czech Republic, Thailand and hometown Turkey, who will certainly have a home-court advantage as well as live television coverage to boot. Only the top two teams in each pool will advance, and Eisler expects the competition to be strong.

"Thailand is a very good volleyball country, the Czechs are strong and we know Turkey's going to send a very strong team. That's one of the interesting things about FISU: you have to qualify to get in to many of the international events, so you have the cream of the crop."

The final roster for the Canadian National B team was selected during the first week of July, when 32 women from across the country vied for the twelve positions on the team. The U of A will be well represented, with Larissa Cundy, Tawana Wardlaw, Amanda Atkinson, Tiffany Dodds and Alexa Berton all earning roster spots. In addition to the five Alberta athletes, Pandas assistant coach Mike Ling will also be travelling to Turkey for what Eisler expects will be a great experience.

"I've never experienced [the University Games] as an athlete, but in '95, walking into that stadium for the opening ceremonies, and having the Canadian flag on your back—there's no feeling like that in the world, and it's exciting to be able to take another group of athletes and help them be prepared for that," Eisler said. "We're not going just to see Turkey; we're going to play volleyball and to try to bring whatever we have to the court."

## Here's to loose cannons



CHRIS O'LEARY

a key ingredient to the team's recipe for success. When things start to go downhill for said team, the once-heroin wears a new hat. The spark plug quickly turns into a drain, an X-factor becomes an A-hole, and that key ingredient will morph into the proverbial cancer that festers at the core of the team's troubles. The loose cannon gets a pat on the back when times are good, and is often run out of town on a rail when there's someone to be blamed for a perceived lack of success.

As Tom Cruise or Ben Affleck will attest, over-exposure can happen to anyone. No matter what your profession, if you're in the limelight, your star can only shine so brightly before the glare begins to wear thin.

For today's sports superstars it's no different. Even to the die-hard sports fan who has every jersey of their dominant icon of choice, the kid who has five posters of the same athlete hanging on his or her bedroom walls, the *Ultimate Gretzky* DVD gets to be old hat after you've watched it a few dozen times. It's not that, as fans, we become repulsed to the point that we don't want to see Kevin Garnett lace up his Adidas' next fall, it's just that we need a break; we need something else.

Enter the loose cannon. Usually an above-average athlete on a team's roster, the loose cannon plays with more in the way of emotion than common sense. He's the first person to sacrifice his body for the sake of the team's success in a crucial moment, but he's also just as likely to curse out an official, start an ill-thought fight, or turn on his coach and teammates when they need him the most. He's also the reason that you want to watch his team play every time they're on TV.

The loose cannon has a unique role in sports. When a team is successful, he dons a positive moniker. He's called the spark plug, an X-factor, and

While we might look for the franchise player to make the big plays at crunch-time, it's the loose cannon-type players that keep us interested in the rest of the game. They're also the type of player who draws outside fans in to a game they don't typically watch.

Consider what's grabbed headlines in the sports world over the last few weeks: things like Kenny Rogers' random destruction of a TV camera and Major League Baseball's decision to allow him to play in last Tuesday's All-star game. Then there was Jeremy Roenick telling disgruntled hockey fans to kiss his ass, then 24 hours later apologizing in an interview on *The Score*, where he said that he was crazy. And of course, Ricky Williams' imminent return to the Miami Dolphins, a year after deciding to end his football career early to pursue interests that were of a "higher" priority to him in Thailand.

While their actions are never the stuff that will make them positive role models, their antics are what dominates sports-radio discussion, gets all the headlines and gives the fine folks at TSN something to talk about. Just wait until Ron Artest suits up for the Indiana Pacers this fall.

## The NHL is back, and this time, we all have reason to hold out hope for a better league



ROSS PRUSAKOWSKI

After a 301-day lockout that produced a seemingly endless amount of legal rhetoric, scores of alienated fans and the transformation of the Stanley Cup into an extravagant dust collector, the National Hockey League is back to warm our hearts and cool our punks.

Though some may find it hard to embrace the league or the players again after hearing endlessly about linkage, lockouts and various forms of caps—though I'm partial to the ball cap myself—they are the people who were never true fans. Come October, millions of hockey fans in Canada (myself included), hundreds in the north-eastern US and all twelve in Nashville will be crawling back through the turnstiles to once again witness the spectacle of professional hockey.

That's because the new collective bargaining agreement (CBA) will cure what ails the league, open the door to unequalled parity amongst the teams, bring back higher scoring to the game, and, most importantly, bring world peace. Despite all the rest of the problems that have plagued the league for the last decade, this CBA does truly bring something to the NHL that hasn't been seen for years: hope.

On the players' side, the new CBA will not only revive the deposits into their bank accounts, but also the part-

nership between them and the game. By linking league revenues and salary expenditures, the players have guaranteed their importance to the game. Now instead of being "exploited" by billionaire owners, the players get to benefit from increased attendance and exposure and will open an era where cooperation will replace confrontation with ownership and fans.

**With both a floor and ceiling on the salary cap, fans will no longer see teams out-spend or cheap their way through the season, meaning that every team—whether they want to or not—will have to compete at roughly the same level.**

For small-market teams, the hope is that the salary cap will actually provide cost certainty and allow them to consistently compete with their deep-pocketed rivals in larger markets. They will no longer suffer from the cycle of drafting and developing skilled players, only to see them bolt for more money once free agency arrives. With the team salary cap and individual player maximum salary provisions in the new CBA, it will be easier for top talent to stay in one city for their whole career, providing teams stability on the ice and in the ledger.


For both the owners and players, the optimism comes mostly in terms of more zeros on their cheques, but they really aren't the ones for whom the CBA provides the most hope. That's because it's the long-suffering fan—be they in Calgary, Columbus, Chicago or anywhere around the globe—that will benefit the most from this particular deal.

With both a floor and ceiling on the salary cap, fans will no longer see teams out-spend or cheap their way through the season, meaning that every team—whether they want to or not—will have to compete at roughly the same level. No longer will teams be able to turn to fans and pass the buck on why the on-ice product was closer to novice hockey than the NHL because they were outspent, resurrecting accountability around the league.

Together with the host of rule changes—including the most exciting play in sports, the shootout, to come at the end of overtime—and finally being able to focus on the product rather than the chances of losing a team, it's hard for fans not to get overly optimistic. Though it might be a little early for people in Winnipeg to buy Winnipeg Predators season tickets, in the new, re-launched NHL, nothing can be dismissed as far-fetched.


The League needs to live up to these hopes and reconnect with fans because, over time, hope fades and is replaced by discontent, melancholy and despair. However, for now, it's hard not to be optimistic, because after a delay from a year-long legal equivalent of someone yelling "car", the NHL has finally responded. Game on.

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### What have you been doing this weekend?

If your answer is lining up in front of Chapters decked out in your full Hogwartz regalia for your copy of *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, and then reading the entire book in three hours, and then spoiling the ending on your blog, and then lamenting the improbability of a romantic relationship between Draco and Hermione, then you clearly need to try something else next weekend.

**You know what you can do? Write for Gateway Sports!**

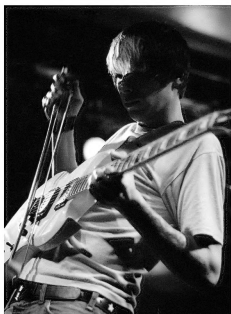
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SOCIAL  
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Our Arts & Entertainment writers go out and get the skinny on what's happening over the weekend and into next few weeks so you don't have to.



MATT FRÖHNER

**BOWL PLAYING SKILLS** Fractal Pattern has them.

**Fractal Pattern**

with Mahogany Frog  
The Victory Lounge  
Friday, 22 July

Hometown bastion of instrumental rock, Fractal Pattern, will be entertaining at the cozy Victory Lounge this Friday with Winnipeg's Mahogany Frog. Fractal Pattern have all the makings of stereotypical local punk music: loud guitars, long hair, and jumping about, complete with a social conscience.

Despite this, Fractal Pattern avoids mediocrity with their careful compositions, and unconventional choices—their performances include French horn and harmonica, for example. So, if you dig rad sideburns and sexy French horns, this is your Friday night.

**Tortoise**

with WestFalia  
The Starlite Room  
Sunday, 24 July

It seems that obscure instrumental rock is out in force this weekend, and who better than Chicago's Tortoise to round of a weekend of musical pretentiousness? Though they may not say much, Tortoise has been influencing obscure rock bands with clever names for well over ten years. Heralded as "the grandfathers of post-punk," "techno-inspired indie-rock," or simply "lyricless jazz," it has become a bit cliché to say that Tortoise's music defies description. But, let me give it one more shot: "goood".

**Drive-by Punch**

with A Last Goodbye, Bleeding Alarm  
and Goodbye Movie Rocket  
Powerplant  
Thursday, 28 July

Battle of the Bands competitions have been around since early cavean plugged their prehistoric guitars into Neanderthal-era amplifiers and created what we know today as pop-punk. Local boys Drive-by Punch have picked up where those revolutionary Cro-Magnons left off, both in their particular choice of musical stylings, and in their competing in a Battle of the Bands. However, unlike their Homo Erectus counterparts, not only did Drive-by Punch choose the mother of all Battle of the Bands to compete in, Sonic 100's "Band of the Month" competition, but they went ahead and won it as well. Their prize? A plum headlining gig at the U of A's own Powerplant. Uhl

MATT FRÖHNER & DAVID BERRY  
Masters of the Music Scene

## A Wedding worth crashing

Despite a terribly tepid trailer, *Wedding Crashers* is the best big-budget comedy since *Old School*

**Wedding Crashers**

Directed by David Dobkin  
Starring Owen Wilson and Vince Vaughn  
Now Playing  
<http://www.weddingcrashersmovie.com/>

MIKE LAROQUE  
Entertainment Editor

Around the time of Vince Vaughn's under-the-table handjob, I knew I was wrong about *Wedding Crashers*.

From the trailers, *Wedding Crashers* seemed like a somewhat banal and contrived comedy. Goofy guys make up outrageous backstories to take part in weddings with hilarity ensuing as they use racy stories to pick up women—that is, until they fall in love, of course. But as standard as the idea may seem, *Wedding Crashers* is absolutely unrelenting in its comedic onslaught, and is quite likely the funniest big-budget comedy since *Old School*.

Abundant womanizers John Beckwith (Owen Wilson) and Jeremy Klein (Vince Vaughn) anticipate the wedding season like some people anticipate Christmas; the duo hits up as many weddings as possible and pick-up scores of women. However, John starts to feel the hollow-ness of his encounters and begins to think that it may be time to hang up his tux for good. That is until they spot the most tempting crash of them all: the wedding of the daughter of the secretary of the treasury (Christopher Walken).

While Jeremy is happily hooking up with the Secretary's wild but obsessively needy daughter Christina, John is desperately trying to legitimately woo his other daughter, Claire (Rachel McAdams). Unable to seal the deal during the wedding reception, John extends his chances by snagging himself and Jeremy a weekend invite to the family's summer home—welcome news for John, but a nightmare for Jeremy, who is now being fanatically doted on by his insecure and commitment-minded wedding date.

While the film can't help itself from cramming



down your throat just how many weddings these guys crash—there is about 20 minutes devoted to clips of them conning various women—Vaughn and Wilson truly shine when the film starts to form a clear plot. Without taking itself overly seriously, *Wedding Crashers* establishes enough of a story that the humour works in moving the film along, avoiding the trap of becoming a long, drawn-out comedy sketch. Similarly, the characters, John and Jeremy are allowed to progress to the point that they're no longer seen as simple womanizers but are still drawn broadly enough that the movie doesn't spiral into a meandering, character-driven bore.

Simply put, *Wedding Crashers* is a funny movie; funny to the point where it doesn't matter if the plot or the characters are especially well done at all. Like *Something About Mary* could make a gel/jizz mix-up hilarious, so does

*Wedding Crashers* elevate the otherwise crude humour of homoerotic paintings and dinner-table handjobs to a fine art. The film's secret weapon is that the humour doesn't lie as much in the gags themselves as it does in the reaction and seemingly off-the-cuff remarks from Wilson and Vaughn. The new kinds of comedy aren't the outrageous humourists or gimmick funny-men, but rather otherwise normal guys who are placed in unbelievably absurd circumstances.

Admittedly, the film feels like it should have ended about 20 minutes earlier than it does, but with raunchy humour that still manages to stay above immaturity, *Wedding Crashers* is an example of a summer comedy in its prime. For a movie about weddings, the real match made in heaven is Wilson and Vaughn, which makes a movie that almost anyone can raise their glass to.

## 3-IRON a dream-like romp through burglary

**3-IRON**

Directed by Ki-duk Kim  
Starring Hyun-ho Kwon, Hyun-yeon Lee and Seung-yeon Lee  
<http://www.storyclassics.com/iron/>  
Metro Cinema  
23–24 July

EDMON ROTEA  
Arts & Entertainment Writer

"It's hard to tell that the world we live in is either a reality or a dream." That line, quoted from the end of the South Korean film *3-IRON*, is ultimately what explains the film's uniquely surreal atmosphere and story.

Ki-duk Kim's *3-IRON* tells the story of Tae-suk (Hyun-yeon Lee), a young man who at first appears to be a door-to-door restaurant-flyer distributor. However, his menial job is actually the first step in a pseudo-criminal scheme: a plan that allows Tae-suk to break into the houses where the flyer has not been removed (believing that the owner is away). Tae-suk then occupies the empty house, making himself at home. But, unlike most burglars (or freeloaders), Tae-suk does household chores including laundry, repairing small objects and watering plants. He even puts everything back in its original place when he leaves.

One day, Tae-suk breaks into the mansion of a wealthy businessman (Hyuk-ho Kwon). Not only does he encounter the wealth and luxurious lifestyle of the rich, but he also hap-

pens upon the businessman's wife, Sun-hwa (Seung-yeon Lee), a woman who appears to have been battered and abused by her husband. What follows is a romantic pairing of the two characters, who together venture out on a wild journey of breaking and "occupying" empty houses—living in the houses as if they were the owners.

**Even though the film depicts its main character performing boring domestic activities—such as cooking, cleaning, and even bathing—it's these everyday events that give the movie a voyeuristic appeal.**

Unfortunately, things change for the worst when Tae-suk and Sun-hwa occupy an empty house only to stumble upon the deceased body of the owner—an event that rapidly changes the film's bright and happy story into a dark and depressing drama.

Fortunately, *3-IRON*'s unpredictable events continually sustain the viewer's attention. Even though the film depicts its main character performing boring domestic activities—such as cooking, cleaning, and even bathing—it's these everyday events that give the movie a

voyeuristic appeal. Not only does the audience get a glimpse into the day-to-day activities of a well-meaning and theft-less burglar, viewers may also contemplate Tae-suk's fate and future actions, especially since he never speaks a single word of dialogue throughout the film—making the truth of his intentions unknown.

*3-IRON* will also appeal to the moviegoer who would otherwise never see a foreign film, mainly because of one thing that some moviegoers hate: reading subtitles. With little or no dialogue spoken by the film's protagonists, *3-IRON* accordingly has few subtitles for the viewer to read. Instead, the film heavily relies upon the characterization and setting to tell a story.

Visually, *3-IRON* is a film that features simple—yet attractive—domestic settings. Viewers will be treated to the uniqueness of each and every South Korean home that Tae-suk and Sun-hwa occupy throughout their unusual journey. Such settings include the sophisticated apartment of an aspiring photographer to the home of a championship boxer, each home being as colourful and unique as the owner who usually occupies it.

*3-IRON*'s international appeal lies in its relatively easy to understand plot, which is based largely in the aforementioned visual intricacies. Viewers will enjoy Tae-suk and Sun-hwa's journey and the unusual events that follow—leaving viewers to ponder whether "the world we live in is either a reality or a dream."



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## FREE STUFF



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NOON to 5PM

**GO:** Thursday, July 21  
South Edmonton Common  
7:00PM

**SEE:** **MURDERBALL**  
Award winning doc about  
Oval Rugby

# No, we're not gonna take it

Twisted Sister releases a CD/DVD combo that is less-than-impressive



**Twisted Sister**  
*Live From Wacken*  
Rebellion Entertainment

DAVE BERRY  
Managing Editor

Few groups have a reputation as incongruous as Twisted Sister. The hair-metalers really only had one hit in their career—1984's "We're Not Gonna Take It"—but thanks to the pseudo-androgyny of Dee Snider and some other general theatrics, the group has gone down as one of the poster bands for the 1980s metal scene; hell, they were quite literally rock's representatives in the 1986 Disney kid movie *Flight of the Navigator*.

Which makes it sort of odd that they're generating a lot of fanfare of late, especially since this CD/DVD collection of live performances and interviews with the band really

reveals just how little this band did/has to say/matters at all in any way. Seriously, the quality of stuff on here honestly makes you wonder if the cheering audiences were spliced in from a U2 concert or whether there actually are that many people blinded by nostalgia and recurring teenage drug habits.

... this CD/DVD collection of live performances and interviews with the band really reveals just how little this band did/has to say/matters at all in any way.

You know, it's not even that Twisted Sister is a bad band, per se (though, well, they are): it's just that they do absolutely nothing to convince you why it is necessary to watch their 40-year-old selves half-ass their way through dated "classics." You know, this band did know how to put on a show, once—the video for their aforementioned hit was one of the most-requested in its day, and it is

something of an MTV classic, if only notoriously—but here they really just seem to be going through the motions, tossing in the appropriate solos when necessary, having Dee Snider sort-of rock out over tired vocals and making sure there's an appropriate amount of head shaking and long hair flying around—there doesn't seem to be any particular care or heart thrown into the mix.

Some of this production might be saved if there were any interesting extras on either the DVD or the CD, but you'd probably have better luck finding a copy of *Flight of the Navigator* at your local movie rental place, to be honest. The boring interviews might sate hardcore fans who were really, really curious about every aspect of Twisted Sister for some reason, but the live CD is even worse than the DVD performance and it doesn't even include "We're Not Gonna Take It," for fuck's sake.

Really, if this is any indication of how much Twisted Sister—and, uh, I guess their record label—care about quality these days, the eight bucks I'm going to spend to get them on Klondike Days just to see them on 29 July is probably going to feel like a total rip-off. And believe me, I'm not gonna take that. No, I'm not gonna take it. I'm not gonna take it, anymore.



**The Redwalls**  
*De Nova*  
Capitol  
[www.theredwalls.com](http://www.theredwalls.com)

LEAH COLLINS  
Arts & Entertainment Writer

The Redwalls are derivative. The early-Beatles melodies, the Motown stomps, the T-Rex guitar-and-horns glam swagger—

hell, even their name is derivative, if not from a page of long-past rock history, then from a British kiddie book. Take a look at this Illinois foursome's shaggy haircuts and tailored outfits (derivative of, well, everyone) and you know they don't give a damn. Listen to their first LP, *De Nova*, and you won't give a damn they're derivative either.

There's nothing original here, but it's hard to stop from dancing a loose-hipped twist to the faux-John Lennon screaming of "It's Alright" and the '60s R&B sax and horns of tracks like "Robinson Crusoe." There are a few lapses: a clip or two into psychedelia and even a hipplified protest song, "Glory of War," but it's the old-timey rock and roll that comes off true for all the mimicry—some old-fashioned hand clapping and walling's unbeatable, even if it is a delayed imitation.



**Bleed the Dream**  
*Built by Blood*  
EMI  
[www.bleedthedream.com](http://www.bleedthedream.com)

MATT FREINER  
Photo Editor

In their own words, "Bleed the Dream navigates the waters of rock and ends

up wearing its heart on its sleeve." I'm not sure exactly what that entails, unless navigating the waters of rock means "being unoriginal," and wearing its heart on its sleeve means "suck." Sure, they fit well with the Wopiel Tour crowd; they seem to be a part of (apparently, they "shambled" their way on to the tour in 2003), but does the world seriously need another Simple Plan variant? Haven't we suffered enough?

Bleed the Dream describes *Built by Blood* as "50 per cent aggressive, 50 per cent passive." Or in other words, they can play their instruments both quickly and slowly, and sometimes they scream, just to mix it up. To be fair, their music isn't bad per se, just as Chinese water torture isn't painful—at first.



**Brian Eno**  
*Another Day on earth*  
EMI  
[www.enoweb.co.uk](http://www.enoweb.co.uk)

MATT FREINER  
Photo Editor

The name Brian Eno may not ring any bells, but he is, without a doubt, the most listened-to artist of the late '90s—he composed the three- and a-quarter-second opus that is the start-up sound for Windows 95. To anyone acquainted with ambient music, though, Eno is God; after all, the ambient genre was largely his invention.

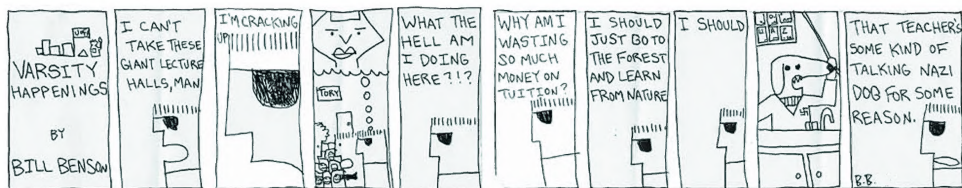
*Another Day on Earth* works, as good ambient music should, by seeping into the subconscious to cause uncontrollable toe-tapping. More accessible than his earlier work, in part because he employs vocals, Eno just seems to have a lot more fun here.

The title track, for example, is exactly the kind of song to listen to while biking to 7-eleven for a Sharpee on a sunny summer's day. This album serves as a fine introduction to the world of ambient music, and fans of Brian Eno will find it familiar, but still fresh.

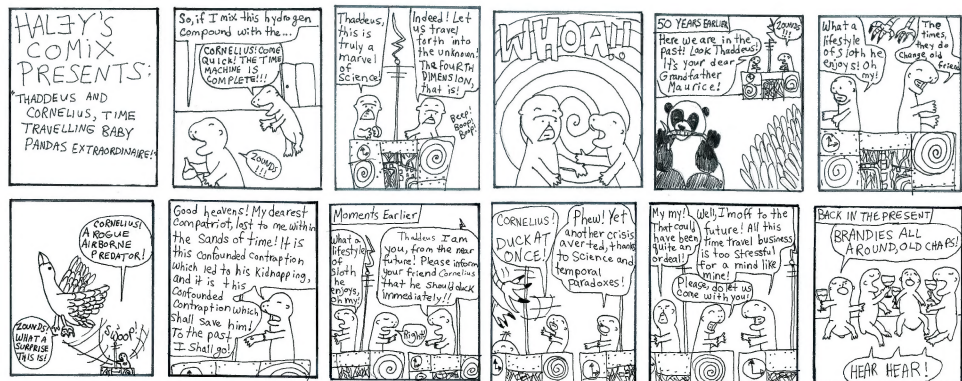
## Gateway Summer Story Meeting: Thursday, 21 July (Today) at 5:30pm

Want to try your hand writing for the paper? Come to room 3-04 in the Students' Union Building at 5:30pm and pick up a story assignment. No writing experience necessary.

## VARSITY HAPPENINGS by Bill Benson



## HALEY'S COMIX by Mike Robertson



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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

ASL sign language course, level one. Begins 20 September 2005 for twelve weeks, Tuesdays 6:30-9:30pm. Contact: Specialized Support and Disability Services, U of A, 492-3381, 2-800-SUB for more information.

## LOST AND FOUND

Lost ladies' Navajo silver ring with opal stone. If found, please ph 447-2595.

## THE STATUS OF THE GATEWAY SLO-PITCH TEAM

We Skybrickdrilling Icehawnmen had our best result ever on Tuesday night, winning the fourth inning 5-0.

The rest of the game wasn't so awesome.



MATT FREHNER

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University is notorious  
for its competitiveness  
and students have looked  
for decades for that extra  
something to propel

# In search of that extra edge

Feature by Nicole Kozloff  
Photo Illustration by Iris Tse

MONTREAL (CUP)—At university, where midterms often come five in a week and campus computer labs can be as busy at 2am as 2pm, students are constantly scrambling for ways to help themselves stay alert, focused and retentive. Most students rely on coffee and other sources of caffeine, adrenaline and sheer will, but others are turning to a drug that is now legally prescribed to nearly 950 000 Canadians annually—Ritalin.

Norman Hoffman, director of McGill University mental health services, says he regularly sees students who claim to have problems concentrating, have heard and read about attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and ask for a prescription for methylphenidate, or Ritalin, as it's commonly known.

"ADHD is probably the least common cause of concentration problems among students," Hoffman said. More commonly, students are simply frustrated by heavy reading and distracted by thoughts of the upcoming weekend. But many students, seeking an edge in academic competition, bypass the route to a Ritalin prescription and simply obtain the drug illegally, often from friends.

Alex, a McGill student, used Ritalin to study for a particularly difficult exam in his first exam period at university. "I remember feeling great," he said. "It did the job."

About seven years ago, mental health professionals became aware of a sharp increase in students abusing prescription stimulants like Ritalin, amphetamines such as Adderall—which was recently banned in Canada because of several instances of sudden death and stroke, and dexamphetamines—such as Dextrostat or Dexedrine.

In 1998, McGill was among the first universities to report that students were illegally swallowing, snorting and even injecting Ritalin. The attention

that was being drawn to the over-prescription of Ritalin at the same time prompted healthcare professionals, in conjunction with the Québec government, to produce clearer, more stringent guidelines for ADHD diagnosis and medication.

Despite clinicians' best efforts, Hoffman said more and more students are in fact using Ritalin as a study aid; he estimates between five and ten per cent. While this prevalence seems remarkably high for stimulant use, the growing prescription of Ritalin is adding to the cultural mentality that the drug is widely used and safe, a belief supported by the drug's street name, "Vitamin R".

Students who experiment with Ritalin often find some truth in the claim that Ritalin is safe because they're not experiencing severe repercussions. "It's not dangerous most of the time," said Hoffman.

Lily Hechtman, director of ADHD research at McGill and the Montréal Children's Hospital, agreed. "It's probably not [dangerous], provided it's not mixed with other things or overused," she said. Whereas doctors monitor a prescribed medication's intended effects and side effects, self-medicating promotes overuse, which, according to Hechtman, can lead to some nasty side effects. These include "over-focus," which refers to some Ritalin users' tendency to fixate on one thing and their consequent inability to multitask.

Hoffman said Ritalin abusers often suffer a meltdown period that can be very uncomfortable, leaving them feeling agitated, emotionally shaky and painfully aware of underlying inside feelings,

them into the academic stratosphere. But with little known for certain about the consequences, is Ritalin the answer to students' woes? McGill University student Nicole Kozloff looks at the increasing use of Ritalin as a study aid among university students

a factor that can lead to breakdown. Hoffman has also seen instances of psychotic episodes after just a few doses of Ritalin. His experience is that Ritalin users often find themselves in a cycle of drug abuse. "They smoke up in the evening to feel more relaxed and then

take Ritalin in the morning to feel more alert," he said.

"You take it, it lasts a couple of hours, and then that's it," said Alex. "But that's why you gotta take another one." Some studies have even made the controversial claim that Ritalin use, even with a prescription, is associated with addiction to illegal stimulants, including cocaine and speed.

Hoffman is also concerned about the issue underlying Ritalin abuse—that students feel they need to use a stimulant in order to do well in school. Students who abuse Ritalin, according to Hoffman, are not satisfied with their natural abilities: they have a sense of inadequacy, a sense of pressure that is often carried throughout life.

While Alex felt Ritalin helped him for his exam, he claimed that he only used it because he was in a "desperate" situation, and hasn't used it since. "When would I stop [using Ritalin]?" he said. "It's not like life suddenly gets easier after university."

Indeed, high-stress North American lifestyles seem to demand optimal performance throughout life. And though Ritalin doesn't seem to be a healthy resource, the queues at Tim Hortons indicate that most of us are still looking for a little help.